

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-02
INR-07 L-03 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 DHA-05
MCT-01 /080 W

-----126046 031100Z /13

O 031004Z NOV 77 ZFF-4

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9430

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

UNCLAS PRETORIA 5913

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MOPS, RH, ZA, WA

SUBJECT: BORDER INCIDENTS WITH RHODESIA AND ZAMBIA

REF: LUSAKA 3310

1. THE COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE SWA COMMAND, MAJOR GENERAL GELDENHUYS, ISSUED STATEMENT NOV. 2 SAYING ZAMBIAN FORCES HAD FIRED ON A SADF OBSERVATION POST AND AN AIR FORCE PLANE NEAR KATIMO MULILO IN THE EASTERN CAPRIVI. HOWEVER, GELDENHUYS SAID NO DAMAGE HAD BEEN DONE AND NO AIRCRAFT SHOT DOWN. GELDENHUYS ADDED THAT "WHETHER THE MORTAR FIRE WAS AN UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT BY SWAPO TERRORISTS TO AVENGE THEIR HUMILIATING DEFEAT OF LAST WEEK (PRETORIA 5855) OR THE RESULT OF POOR DISCIPLINE IN THE ZAMBIAN ARMY IS STILL A MATTER OF SPECULATION."

2. MEANWHILE, LOCAL PRESS REPORTS THAT THE RHODESIANS
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HAVE ALSO DENIED THAT AN AIRCRAFT WAS SHOT DOWN BY THE ZAMBIANS. COMBINED OPERATIONS HEADQUARTERS IN SALISBURY DID RELEASE DETAILS OF AN INCIDENT AT VICTORIA FALLS ON NOV. 2 WHERE THE LUXURY GOLF AND CASINO RESORT, THE ELEPHANT HILLS COUNTRY CLUB, WHICH HAD BEEN DIRECTED AT A SMALL AIRCRAFT WAS HIT BY ROCKET FIRE. THE HOTEL, SAID TO BE RHODESIA'S

MOST EXPENSIVE AT A WORTH OF RAND 2 MILLION, WAS REPORTEDLY DESTROYED BY FIRE. ACCORDING TO MEDIA ACCOUNTS, NO ONE WAS INJURED IN THE INCIDENT. FOREIGN MINISTER VAN DER BYL REPORTEDLY BLAMED ZAMBIAN FORCES FOR THE INCIDENT, SAYING "SUCH CONTEMPTIBLE ACTS AMPLY ILLUSTRATE ZAMBIA'S DISREGARD FOR THE LIVES OF INNOCENT CIVILIANS."NELSON

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